

REPORT

OF THE

POSTMASTER GENERAL,

TO WHOM WAS REFERRED THE

*Memorial of sundry citizens of Maryland,*

IN RELATION TO

*The Transportation of the Public Mail,*

BETWEEN PHILADELPHIA AND BALTIMORE.

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JANUARY 31, 1825.

Referred to the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads.

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1825.



## POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,

29th January, 1825.

SIR: In obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives, of the United States, of the 24th instant, which directed that the memorial of sundry citizens of the state of Maryland, upon the subject of transporting the United States mail, between the cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia, should be referred to the Postmaster General, with instructions to report to the House what provisions are necessary by law, if any, to remove the evil complained of by the petitioners; I have the honor to state, that, during a considerable part of the winter and spring seasons of the year, when the weather is mild, the great mail route between the above cities is so bad, as to render the rapid movement of the stages upon it impracticable.

As there is but little travel on the greater part of this route, when the steamboats ply upon the Chesapeake and Delaware, the necessary repairs upon it have been almost wholly neglected for some years past. But, if this road were turnpiked the entire distance, the crossing of the Susquehannah at Havre-de-Grace, which is more than a mile wide, will always impede, and frequently stop, the progress of the mail. High winds sometimes render an attempt to cross extremely hazardous: but floating ice, in the winter and spring seasons, forms the most serious obstacles. Although the utmost exertions are always used by experienced ferrymen, the boat is frequently several hours in crossing with the mail. The time of crossing at this season, is in the night, and frequently the darkness is so great, that the ferrymen have no other guide than the sounding of horns. The North East, big Elk and Little Elk, are often impassable on this route, immediately after a heavy rain. These streams rise suddenly, and their currents are so rapid when swollen, that, to cross them, is very dangerous. Last winter, in crossing them, as well as the Susquehanna, the mail was near being lost several times. At one time, one of the stage horses was drowned, and the others, with the mail, were saved by very great exertions.

The only effectual remedy to avoid delays at these rivers, would be, to construct bridges over them. North East, Big Elk, and Little Elk, might be bridged at a small expense, but a bridge over the Susquehanna at Havre de Grace, if practicable, could not be seriously contemplated by any one, when the bridge at Port Deposit stands only six miles above. This bridge has been constructed at an expense of about one hundred and eighty thousand dollars, and is represented to be of good materials and superior workmanship. When it was built, a turnpike road was contemplated to it from Baltimore, on nearly a direct line, thence, by the way of Newark, to Staunton, through which the present mail route passes. By actual survey, this

route from Staunton to Baltimore, is about one mile shorter than the road by Havre de Grace.

The "Baltimore and Rock Run Turnpike Company," after constructing the bridge at Port Deposit, ceased further to prosecute their designs. No part of the turnpike has been made. Several roads lead from Baltimore to this bridge, and thence to intersect the present mail route eastwardly, but, it is understood, that none of them are in a condition to admit of stages.

From Staunton to Baltimore, on the route surveyed by the way of the bridge, it is fifty seven miles and a half. It will not, however, be necessary to construct a road the whole of this distance, should it be deemed proper to establish the great mail route by the way of the bridge. The Baltimore and Havre de Grace turnpike runs nearly on the proper direction to the Great Gunpowder, a distance from Baltimore of thirteen miles; from thence to the bridge, the ground is represented to be level, and such as will admit of a road at a small expense. From the bridge to Staunton, is twenty-six miles. To pass from the bridge by the way of Elkton, would increase the distance to Staunton four miles. Should this route be preferred, it would be only necessary to make a road from the bridge to Elkton, a distance of about seventeen miles.

The road from Elkton to Staunton has been turnpiked. If a road of thirty-five or six miles in length, estimating the distance on both sides of the Susquehanna, were constructed, and bridges thrown over Big Elk and Little Elk, all obstructions to the rapid and regular transmission of the mail, between Baltimore and Philadelphia, would be removed. The road from the bridge at Port Deposit to Elkton, would cross the North East Creek, at Gilpin's bridge.

The distance from Baltimore to Philadelphia, by the way of Port Deposit bridge and Elkton, would not be increased over the present mail route, more than three miles.

I have the honor to be,

very respectfully,

your obedient servant.

JOHN M-LEAN.

The Hon. HENRY CLAY,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled,*

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Maryland,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

That your petitioners, in common with a great portion of the citizens of the States east and south of Maryland, experience great inconvenience, and are liable to great commercial injury and loss from the delays which frequently occur, during every winter season, in the transmission of the Mail between Philadelphia and Baltimore; chiefly on that part of the Post Road in this State, and more particularly from the difficulty of crossing the river Susquehanna, when its passage is impeded by ice. Your petitioners have reason to believe, that such delays could be wholly prevented, if a change were made in the course of the post road, so that the Susquehanna might be passed over by a bridge; and that by such a change, the road would be formed upon much better ground, would be more easily kept in repair, and the distance shortened. Your petitioners conceive, that such a change in the post road from Baltimore to Philadelphia, would, if properly constructed, be so beneficial to a large portion of the citizens of the United States. and so generally useful as an internal improvement, as to justify their expectation, that it may be effected at the expense, and under the direction of the General Government. They therefore respectfully pray, that an adequate appropriation may be made for the purpose, to be applied in such manner as you in your wisdom shall deem best calculated to produce the desired effect.

And your petitioners will ever pray.







